

INITIAL STATEMENT OF REASONS

FIREFIGHTING VEHICLES

SECTION 157.00, ARTICLE 3, TITLE 13

Vehicle Code Section 4015 provides that any privately owned vehicle designed or capable of being used for firefighting purposes when operated upon a highway only in responding to and returning from emergency fire calls is exempt from registration. Government Code Section 8589.10(c) provides the definition of firefighting vehicles that is used to determine if a privately owned vehicle is exempt from registration.

The purpose of this regulation is to define what privately owned firefighting vehicles qualify for exemption under Vehicle Code Section 4015.

Section 157.00(a)

It is necessary to provide the definition of firefighting vehicles as defined in Government Code Section 8589.10(c). Confusion exists among companies that operate buses, only during the peak fire season, to transport crewmembers and equipment to fires. Providing the definition of a firefighting vehicle should help owners of privately owned firefighting vehicles to determine if their equipment meets this definition.

It is necessary for clarity to identify the types of privately owned firefighting vehicles that qualify for exemption from registration as defined in Government Code Section 8589.10(c) and Vehicle Code Section 4015. Privately-owned vehicles designed or capable of being used for firefighting purposes when operated upon a highway only in responding to, and returning from, emergency fire calls are exempt from registration. There is confusion among privately owned businesses what constitutes the meaning of a firefighting vehicle. These companies have been assuming that vehicles such as buses and catering vehicles contracted for use by public fire districts should be included in this category since these vehicles are only used during the fire season. However, Vehicle Code Section 4015 states privately owned vehicles must be used for firefighting purposes, meaning used for putting out an actual fire, and does not include vehicles which are designed and intended for use primarily for emergency medical services, rescue services, communications and command operations, or hazardous materials operations, or buses. This list will assist privately owned business in determining if any of their vehicles qualify as stated in this section.

Section 157.00(b)

It is necessary for clarity to provide the type of vehicles that do not qualify for exemption from registration. There is evidence that private companies that own and lease out transportation services, have been operating this equipment on the public highways without being properly registered. These companies may be characterized as a commercial specialized carrier of persons and property, which provide service under contract with governmental agencies. These companies generally move these vehicles throughout the eleven western states to locations where there is a fire hazard. The vehicles may also be operated on the public highways to move persons and material to staging locations. Employees of the company drive the subject vehicles to locations for storage, and to get routine and extraordinary maintenance performed at repair stations or terminal facilities. Although the vehicles are generally operated during the season exclusively in connection with firefighting purposes, it is likely that the majority of the mileage accrued by the vehicles is not the actual transport of persons and material directly to and from actual sites where a forest fire is raging. This list will assist these companies in making sure these types of vehicles are properly registered.